



New Research Network Launched: Berlin on the way to becoming a social and ecological city

News

Date

29 October 2020

Location

Berlin, Germany

With a new research network, the city of Berlin aims to be able to better address central future issues such as climate protection, digitalization and sustainable economic activity. For the first time, Berlin's Senate Office for Higher Education and Research is funding a consortium of five independent, non-profit research institutes that are based in Berlin and part of the Ecological Research Network (Ecor-net). Ecor-net is a German network of independent research institutes with a focus on the environment and sustainability. The goal of this unprecedented research project "Wissen. Wandel. Berlin" is to strengthen Berlin's pioneering role in the development of innovative approaches to ensuring a livable, climate-neutral and sustainable city. At the Berlin Science Week, which takes place between 1 and 10 November 2020, the network and its research projects will be presented in a series of public events.

Research at the interface of nature and society

Like most big cities, Berlin will face enormous challenges in the coming years. The city wants to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 85 percent by 2050. At the same time, it is estimated that more than 300,000 additional people will move to Berlin. The city is getting older, polarizes socio-spatially and is becoming more digital and international.

"In order to be able to politically shape this dynamic transformation at the interface of nature and society, Berlin needs specific knowledge," explains Thomas Korbun, spokesperson of the research network and Scientific Director of the Institute for Ecological Economy Research (IÖW). "It is important to always also think of issues of distribution and justice when thinking of environmental and climate protection. The Ecor-net's institutes have specialized expertise in this type of social-ecological research, and now we are pooling this expertise for Berlin's future".

A key element of the network is its focus on inter- and transdisciplinary research approach. "In close cooperation with relevant urban society actors and within the framework of six research projects, we are developing concrete recommendations for action that will help Berlin make progress in key future fields," explains the network's spokeswoman Anke Herold, Managing Director of Öko-Institut.

A fair climate and energy transition, a sustainable economy and digitization

As one of its research topics, the network will examine what strategies are available for achieving a climate-neutral buildings stock by 2050 – with a focus on tenant friendliness. Another project centers around possible data governance concepts in Berlin that are oriented towards the common good. This is in line with the network's goal of better addressing the socio-ecological challenges that digitization brings with in areas such as mobility, health, regional economy and municipal infrastructures, also from a distributional perspective.

About the research network Ecornet Berlin

The research network Ecornet Berlin consists of: Ecologic Institute, Institute for Ecological Economy Research (IÖW), IZT – Institute for Futures Studies and Technology Assessment, Öko-Institut and Independent Institute for Environmental Issues. The five research institutions with headquarters or offices in Berlin are part of the Ecological Research Network (Ecornet), a network of independent institutes of environmental and sustainability research in Germany with the common mission to scientifically substantiate social change towards sustainability. The project is carried out with the financial support of the Governing Mayor, Higher Education and Research Berlin.

Duration

29 October 2020

Project

[Circular City Berlin – From potential towards implementation \(CiBER 1\)](#)

Keywords

[Cities](#)

[Resource Conservation + Circular Economy](#)

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